

Mortimer, Adam (MAG)

From: Letang, Chris (SOLGEN)
Sent: Friday, February 18, 2022 10:26 PM
To: DiTommaso, Mario (SOLGEN)
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Subject: Strategic Update - 2022 02 18

Deputy, please find this evening's update –the current situation remains dynamic and we will update should any developments materialize which significantly change the assessment or which may impact the current understanding / picture. Have a good evening.

Chris

STRATEGIC UPDATES FOR DEPUTY SOLICITOR GENERAL

The information in this report is current to 2022-02-18 at 2200 hours.

Opposition to Public Health Measures

No incidents to report.

ASSESSMENT

Currently, there is no specific, identified threat and monitoring remains attuned to where ideologically motivated extremism may manifest among participants in or supporters of opposition activities.

Freedom Convoy 2022

On February 14, 2022, the federal government invoked the *Emergencies Act* to provide additional powers to handle ongoing blockades and protests against pandemic restrictions. PM Trudeau said the measures will be geographically targeted and time limited. A cabinet declaration of emergency is in effect immediately and must be presented to Parliament within seven days. If either the Commons or the Senate votes against the motion, the emergency declaration will be revoked.

Ottawa Demonstrations

Police Reporting

The Ottawa Police Service (OPS), with the assistance of the OPP, RCMP and municipal police from across the country, initiated enforcement action to remove convoy vehicles from the downtown core this morning (February 18, 2022). Police established approximately 100 checkpoints throughout a 3.5 square kilometer area of the downtown core to support the clearing and securing of the area. Security fencing was also installed around Parliament Hill and other federal buildings. Off-ramp access on Highway 417 (Queensway) East & West were also closed and posted by police units to prevent further convoy vehicles from entering the city. MTO later assumed responsibility for the Highway 417 posts.

OPS advised demonstrators that they will face severe penalties if they do not cease further unlawful activity and remove their vehicles and/or property immediately from all unlawful protest sites. Some demonstrators vacated, some surrendered to police and some protestors were arrested.

A total of approximately 100 individuals have been arrested thus far, including several prominent leadership figures of the convoy protests. Over 20 vehicles had been towed from the downtown core during the phased enforcement (as of 1800 hours).

Earlier in the day, approximately 30-40 protestors locked arms and sat 30 meters east of Sussex/Rideau on Rideau Street. Multiple arrests were made and processed. Rideau/Sussex intersection was reported secured at 1530 hours.

Police reporting notes that at approximately 1700 hours, the crowd became increasingly aggressive at Rideau and Wellington. Toronto Police Service Mounted Unit was deployed to create a wedge between police and the crowd.

1 OPS member suffered minor injuries during arrests and was assessed and discharged by EMS. 1 RCMP member was choked by a protester. No further injuries sustained by officers have been reported.

Gatineau Police advised that convoy participants were trying to circumvent traffic hardening points by driving to Gatineau, parking vehicles and walking across to Ottawa. Gatineau Police therefore moved to close pedestrian access at Alexandria and Portage bridges.

Open Source Reporting

National news media reported extensively on the enforcement action today. Several live stream videos by protestors were posted, including by leadership figures that were eventually arrested. A number of social media call outs for protestors to mobilize to different potential blockade sites are referenced in their relevant jurisdictions below.

Media reporting notes that a convoy leadership figure arrested yesterday was released on bail today. He has indicated he will be returning home to Swift Current, Saskatchewan.

Toronto Demonstrations

Police Reporting

Out of an abundance of caution, Queen's Park Circle remains closed to vehicle traffic. All other road closures have been reopened.

A protest is planned at the Legislature for noon on February 19, 2022 (tomorrow). The group organizing the demonstration has organized a number of rallies at Queen's Park throughout the pandemic.

Open Source

A livestreamed video from a supporter of the Toronto convoy protestors instructed supporters to go to Bedford Avenue and Bloor Street in Toronto tonight to "camp out". The live streamer requested trucks to attend to the site and start an "Ottawa 2.0". Bay Street was also suggested as a secondary site for protests. TPS and OPP are engaged.

A counter-protest banner drop action has been organized for Toronto. The group page “#KKKonvoyGoHome” provided the following details: Saturday, February 19, 2022, at 15:00 hours, at the Don Valley Parkway Pedestrian Bridge near (450 Broadview Avenue).

Ports of Entry - Windsor

Police Reporting

Ambassador Bridge is fully open. Canada-bound and US-bound traffic is flowing freely. The City of Windsor received an extension on the injunction prohibiting anyone from blocking access to the Ambassador Bridge. The previous order was to expire February 21, 2022.

Open Source

Information is circulating that protestors plan on returning to Ambassador Bridge in response to the activity in Ottawa. A potential demonstration is planned for February 19, 2022 (tomorrow).

Unconfirmed social media information indicating that protestors planned on attending the Ambassador Bridge at 1700 hours today did not materialize. OPP and Windsor Police Service remain engaged.

Ports of Entry – Niagara / Queenston-Lewiston Bridge

Police Reporting

The QEW is open. No issues were reported.

Unconfirmed social media information from TPS Intelligence identified a potential convoy to take the Queenston, Lewiston Bridge on February 19, 2022.

Ports of Entry – Sarnia

Police Reporting

Highway 402 is open.

Additional staging has been established in Warwick, close to Hwy 402, in order to more effectively respond to any attempt at disrupting Blue Water critical infrastructure and to any associated Highway 402 convoys.

OPP reporting indicates that traffic is moving normally at the Blue Water Bridge.

Ports of Entry – Nipigon

Police Reporting

OPP reporting has identified a potential blockade at the Nipigon River Bridge scheduled for February 26, 2022.

Other Potential Activity

OPP reporting indicates that a group of people have travelled to possibly block the border at Pigeon River, and appear to be camping on site. Their intention is unclear.

There have been 7 identified convoys planned in OPP North East Region for February 19 2022: City of Kawartha Lakes, Collingwood, Haliburton Highlands, Northumberland, Peterborough, Huntsville, and Bracebridge. Updates will continue for each as information becomes available.

Open Source Reporting

Social media information indicates that farmers from the Thunder Bay area intend to block bridges and border crossings with 1000 tractors. The message also claims that they are going to a border crossing with 5,000 vehicles, including commercial motor vehicles. The border point is not named: it is possible that Pigeon River is the destination.

Local convoy actions are anticipated in other jurisdictions across the province, please see the updated event schedule for additional information.

Social media information has called for peaceful protests in other jurisdictions that have provided police personnel to Ottawa.

Media reporting indicates that commercial truck drivers in the US are planning to begin their own convoys.

ASSESSMENT

The situation in Ottawa is tense and volatile. Enforcement action currently underway has and will likely continue to lead to incidents of physical conflict between protestors and police. The repeated narrative of peaceful protest and refusing to react to provocation means that some protestors will likely continue to engage in passive resistance as enforcement action continues. Some protestors appear to believe that any police action against them is illegal and, for this reason, they have the right to defend themselves and each other with physical force, if necessary.

Yesterday's 'Notice to Demonstration Participants' issued by police to protestors effectively deemed the blockade action unlawful and outlined a number of legal consequences for both participants and supporters. While reactions from participants ranged from polite to inflammatory, some also reflected elements of sovereign citizen ideology. The presence of this kind of ideologically motivated extremism raises the potential for conflict and presents an officer safety risk. It also suggests some participants believe they are exempt from enforcement actions on private property which could raise the potential for barricaded-persons scenarios. The potential for protest participants to be armed, as well as the availability of heavy equipment, poses a additional public safety risks as some participants may become inspired to act on account of a real or perceived deteriorating position.

Notably, there has been a downturn in social media posts of relevance and it appears fewer protest actions are being shared through open channels. While this could suggest interest in the 'Freedom' movement is waning, there are early indicators that organizers are instead moving to platforms and modes of communication that are outside the reach of law enforcement. A heightened awareness to the possibility that protests and/or actions will erupt elsewhere in the province with a view to overwhelm or strain law enforcement. This potential may increase in light of the recent changes which effectively deem the Ottawa blockade and support to the blockade unlawful.

At this juncture, there is no concrete, specific, or credible threat with regard to the Freedom Convoy protest and Operation BearHug 2.0 activity. However, the possibility that a lone actor

or group of individuals could enact a physical threat with little or no warning cannot be excluded.

EVENT SCHEDULE

February 19, 2022

Alberta Freedom Convoy 2022

Attempting to fill a charter bus to Ottawa

Locations and timing U/K

Pickups in Red Deer, Calgary, Medicine Hat, Swift Current and Regina

Toronto

Possible planned protest at Queens Park at 1200 and counter-protest banner drop on the Don Valley Parkway.

Cornwall

Possible planned protest to take place on February 19, 2022, time U/K

Windsor

Possible planned protest to take place at the Windsor Waterfront.

Niagara Peninsula Convoy 2022

Potential target of is the Peace Bridge/Queenston-Lewiston via slow roll/blockade.

Haldimand- Norfolk

Possible protest at 1030 hours, exact location U/K

Hamilton

Freedom of Choice Rally, estimated 50-200 persons attending

Saturday February 26, 2022

Nipigon Bridge

Protest was scheduled for 13 February has been rescheduled for February 26, 2022

U/K Date

Thunder Bay

Canada Unity – Operation Bearhug Canada

Strategic Border crossing disruptions. Plans unconfirmed.

Chris Letang

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